

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022

Courant Community

LOCAL NEWS

Chamber holds Annual Meeting



Outgoing Chairman of the Board of Directors Paul Haas (left) and CT River Valley Chamber President Jessica Olander (right) present a special recognition to Dean Marchessault. Story, more photos, pages 8-9. **STEVE SMITH/COURANT COMMUNITY**

LOCAL NEWS



Mihika Joshi, 13, is continuing her efforts to honor all of South Windsor's veterans. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

Local girl continues to recognize veterans

Mihika Joshi helped create a project that added banners on light posts at South Windsor's Nevers Park. **Page 5**

LOCAL NEWS

Food bank serves from Manchester warehouse

The New England hub is the latest addition to the global organization's facilities. **Page 3**

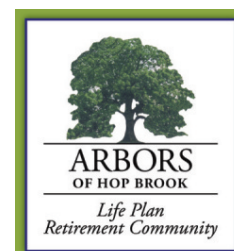
LOCAL NEWS

Greater Hartford sees major development

Few anticipated a wave of large-scale apartment and condo projects when the pandemic started. **Page 6**

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Knitters, crocheters, quilters sought

VERNON — STAFFORD SPRINGS — The Stafford Prayer Shawl Ministry meets from 2 to 3 p.m. the second Monday of each month, except July and August, in the Stafford Public Library, 10 Levinthal Run.

The date of the next meeting will be on Monday, Feb. 14. The group welcomes individuals who would like to attend and knit, crochet, or quilt much needed prayer shawls. Members will also teach guests how to knit or crochet.

If you cannot make the meeting but want to make prayer shawls at home, someone will pick them up. If you or your pastor knows of anyone who could use a prayer shawl, they will arrange for one to be picked up.

Contact Karen at 860-982-5896 or Kathy at 860-684-9484 for information or pick-up arrangements. All are welcome. If the library is closed due to the weather, the prayer shawl meeting will be canceled also.

Alzheimer's Support Group to meet twice a month

SOUTH WINDSOR — An Alzheimer's Support Group will meet from 10 to 11 a.m. the first Wednesday of the month and 5 to 6 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month, at HarborChase, 1000 Evergreen Way.

The group will share valuable and comforting information and discuss the stress associated with caring for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia. Learn how others maintain healthy social lives and cope with feelings of isolation. This group meeting is ideal for caregivers, family members, and close friends. Complimentary light refreshments will be served. Space is limited. Call 860-269-3639 to RSVP.

Library offering programs on moose, Tween Code Club

MANCHESTER — Manchester Public Library, 586 Main St., is hosting the following programs. Visit <https://library.town-ofmanchester.org/> or call 860-645-0821 for more information.

Returning Connecticut DEEP Wildlife Expert Ginny Apple begins a new monthly series with more of Connecticut's wildlife

and nature. February's focus is on Connecticut's moose. No registration is required for this free, in-person program for adults. The program will take place at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7.

Middle School Nights will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 9, 16 and 23, at the Manchester Public Library. Those in grades 6 to 8 are invited to learn the basics of block coding and to meet other coders. The group meets once a month. Register by calling 860-645-0821 or visiting the reference desk.

The Tween Code Club will meet from 3 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at the Manchester Public Library. Those in grades 6 to 8 are invited to learn the basics of block coding and to meet other coders. The group meets once a month. Register by calling 860-645-0821 or visiting the reference desk.

Nature's Paintbrush: Intro To Natural Dyes and Inks will take place at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 28. This free program is limited to 20 adult participants who must call the Reference Room at 860-645-0821 to secure their spot.

Beth MacDonald, Spruce Street Community Garden Coordinator, will share information on the types of dye plants that can be grown in your home garden, and the process/materials needed to bring your vibrant vision to life. Color samples and a live demonstration will be provided.

Manchester Women's Club hosting monthly meetings

MANCHESTER — The Manchester Women's Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month. February's date is Feb. 8 and the group will meet at Manchester High School, 134 Middle Turnpike E., in the freshmen wing teachers' lounge.

The club conducts a wide variety of volunteer activities to help others in the community, such as Little Free Libraries for children, projects for vets and MACC, and social activities. Visit www.manchesterwomensclub.org or email manchestertwomensclub@gmail.com for more information.

Terrarium demonstration program taking place

GLASTONBURY — The featured speaker at the February meeting of the Evergreen Country Gardeners will be Nancy Ballek

of Ballek's Garden Center of East Haddam. Ballek will explain and demonstrate the fundamentals of terrarium design.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, at the Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. Ballek will display a large selection of sun or low light plants suitable for terrariums. Participants can bring their own container, or select from a wide choice of hanging and tabletop terrariums available for purchase.

A selection of plants, mosses, soils and stones will be also available to buy a la carte to create an individual garden. The program is open to the public, with advance registration required. Masks are required.

Visit <https://evergreencountrygardeners.com/> for more information or to register. Guest attendance is limited. Non-members must register no later than Feb. 6.

Meditation for Beginners taking place

GLASTONBURY — Meditation for Beginners will take place from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at Odiyana Meditation Center, 450 New London Turnpike. The program will be livestreamed and in-person.

The course includes guided meditations and practical advice to carry into daily life. Everyone is welcome. Cost to attend is \$20. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. Visit meditationinconnecticut.org for more information or to register.

Candlelight Writing Workshops offering programs

GLASTONBURY — Candlelight Writing Workshops with founder Jane Gordon Julien is offering creative writing programs. Visit www.janegordonjulien.com for more information. Email janegordonjulien@gmail.com to register.

Creative Writing 101 is a six-week craft class and writing workshop for beginning and intermediate writers that begins Monday, Feb. 21, at 6 p.m. Cost is \$300; a non-refundable deposit of \$150 holds your place.

Class sizes are limited. The meeting location is to be determined depending on the spread of new variations of COVID.

Advanced Creative Writing begins Thurs-

day, April 7, and runs for six weeks. Cost is \$300; a non-refundable deposit of \$150 holds your place. Class sizes are limited. The meeting location is to be determined depending on the spread of new variations of COVID.

Hillstown Grange hosting series of gardening programs

EAST HARTFORD — The Hillstown Grange is offering a series titled 'Growing Your Own for Beginning and Intermediate Gardeners.' The series began on Feb. 1 and will continue on the first and third Tuesdays in February, March, April and May, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The February presentation will be online via Zoom and then hopefully in March, they will also be live and in person at the hall on 617 Hills St. The series of presentations has the aim of preparing you to be successful and productive by walking you through the steps of siting and planning your garden, soil prep, the art of watering, what to grow, when to start growing them and the practices and methods to ensure a harvest.

The presentations will last about 45 minutes to an hour, with 30 minutes for questions, more if needed. Organizers are asking for a \$5 donation per presentation. Membership to the Hillstown Grange is also available, for \$50.

Any proceeds or donations will go to further the Hillstown Grange outreach program which organizers hope to diversify with DIY and homesteading skills. Contact Dan Gallagher at daninct@yahoo.com or Frank Forrest at hillstowngrange@aol.com or 860-690-2845 for more information.

Tolland Library to celebrate 'Take Your Child to the Library Day'

TOLLAND — The Tolland Public Library, 21 Tolland Green, is celebrating 'Take Your Child to the Library Day' on Saturday, Feb. 5.

'Take Your Child to the Library Day' is an international initiative that encourages families everywhere to take their children to their local library. A special story time will begin at 10:30 a.m. Other activities include take-home crafts, a scavenger hunt, and

Turn to Community News, Page 4

Courant Community

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Contact Courant Community Editor Erin Quinlan at 860-875-3366, Ext. 3030 or equinlan@courant.com.

Send press releases, community events and photos, news tips or letters to the editor to community@courant.com.

To submit Good Neighbor items, birthday greetings, engagement or wedding announcements, email community@courant.com.

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Scan with your smartphone to shop at the Hartford Courant Store mobile website.

Food bank's New England hub serves Connecticut pantries and soup kitchens from its new Manchester warehouse

By Jesse Leavenworth
Hartford Courant

MANCHESTER — Leading a tour of Midwest Food Bank's Manchester warehouse, Jan Young stopped at a giant cardboard box that was bowed from the weight of soup cans, sweet peas and other nonperishables.

"This is a gold mine!" the food bank's executive director said.

The regional distributor of donated food has launched operations after moving last year into the former Mustangs Unlimited location at West Middle Turnpike and Adams Street. The New England hub is the latest addition to the global organization's facilities in several states, Kenya and Haiti.

Food comes into Manchester by the truckload and is distributed to soup kitchens, pantries and other charitable outfits, mostly in Connecticut, Young said. The eventual goal, she said, is to distribute \$30 million worth of food each year throughout New England.

The coronavirus pandemic spotlighted food insecurity in Connecticut as thousands of people lined up for Foodshare's distribution at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, where the organization gave out more than 6 million meals in 10 months.

One in nine people in Hartford and Tolland counties are food insecure, meaning they lack consistent access to adequate nourishment, according to Foodshare. Across the nation in 2020, according to Midwest Food Bank's latest annual report, 50.4 million households were food insecure and one in five Americans turned to pantries or other charitable outfits for donated food.

Young stressed that Midwest Food Bank collaborates with Foodshare and other distributors and is not in competition. Midwest gets most of its donations from big companies such as Kellogg's, which may have made too much of one product, or have a particu-



Volunteer Joe Koch of Ellington donates his time at the Midwest Food Bank's new Manchester warehouse. He is also a member of the food bank's advisory board.

lar product that did not sell well or food approaching a "sell by" date that is still safe for consumption.

The 55,000-square-foot Manchester facility is split into a 19,000-square-foot community room, where volunteers box items for pantries, and the warehouse, where floor-to-ceiling steel racks hold pallets of food, beverages, cleaning supplies and other items.

One pallet, for example, held 18 cases of Frosted Flakes. Another held 960 pounds of microwaveable rice, and another was stacked with 22 cases of Pringles potato crisps.

With an annual budget of \$1.2 million and only three paid staffers, Young said the operation depends on volunteers. The Manchester operation's commercially licensed tractor-trailer drivers and certified forklift operators are volunteers, as are the people who sort and pack

items for distribution to agencies such as Manchester Area Conference of Churches and Charities.

Joe Koch of Ellington, a member of Midwest Food Bank New England's advisory board, volunteers daily. Koch, 67, said he retired recently as vice president of marketing for Country Pure Foods, so he knows the food industry.

He and Young said the Manchester warehouse has started taking perishable items, which are stored in three 40-foot long refrigerated containers. The warehouse also has boxes of donated cleaning supplies and other non-food items, even socks.

Renovations estimated to cost \$500,000 are ongoing. Young said plans are to install offices, a conference room and a warming kitchen that will be open to businesses, churches and other organizations. The open door policy is meant to



Volunteers Joe Koch, left, and Brent Carland sort food inside the warehouse. The food bank has only three paid employees and is run mostly by volunteers. MARK MIRKO/THE HARTFORD COURANT

"To share the love of Christ by alleviating hunger and malnutrition locally and throughout the world and providing disaster relief, all without discrimination."

— Midwest Food Bank mission



Midwest Food Bank has opened a new 55,000 square foot facility in Manchester.

make the food bank an integral part of the community, Young said.

Midwest Food Bank's stated mission is "to share the love of Christ by alleviating hunger and malnutrition locally and throughout the world and providing disaster relief, all without discrimination."

Total revenue in 2020 was about

\$420 million, and about \$383 million worth of food was distributed, according to the annual report. Besides food pantries, the organization also distributes disaster relief and runs special programs focused on feeding children.

Jesse Leavenworth can be reached at jleavenworth@courant.com.

Community News

from Page 2

more. The programs are for all ages. Call 860-871-3621 or email ageary@tolland.org for more information.

Ellington Farmers Market hosting indoor market

ELLINGTON — The Ellington Farmers Market's Super Saturday indoor market will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at Ellington High School, 37 Maple St.

This is the second to last indoor market and will feature 30-plus vendors in the high school gymnasium. Vendors offer special discounts on a wide variety of products.

Library hosting preschool story time, read to the dogs

ELLINGTON — Hall Memorial Library, 93 Main St., is hosting in-person story hours for various ages beginning in February. Three to five year olds who are ready for an independent library experience are welcome to attend a weekly Tuesday morning story hour from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m.

Included will be stories, songs, and movement activities. Masks are required and caregivers should remain in the children's section of the library, during the program.

Children who are already two and one-half years old may attend a Wednesday morning session from 10:30 to 11 a.m. Parents and caregivers are asked to attend this weekly program along with their child. This program will include stories, songs, and a craft activity.

Both events will be led by the children's librarian and will run from Feb. 8 until April 6. Online registration is required and space is limited. The programs are free. To regis-

ter or for more information, visit www.library.ellington-ct.gov or call 860-870-3160.

Hall Memorial Library will host the Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs on Saturday, Feb. 12, and Saturday, Feb. 26, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

This program is open to all readers five to 12 years of age. These dogs are especially trained to listen quietly as children read a favorite story or the chapter of a favorite book to them.

Visit www.library.ellington-ct.gov or call 860-870-3160 to register. Bring a story with you and wear a mask.

Arts Center East hosting fiber arts exhibit

VERNON — Arts Center East, 709 Hartford Turnpike, is offering the following programs. Visit <https://artscentereast.org/> for more information.

The Fiber Arts Exhibit will run from Feb. 5 to 26. Gallery hours are Thursday through Saturday, 1 to 5 p.m. The exhibit is free and open to the public and is viewable online at www.artscentereast.org/fiber-arts.

The submission deadline for Still Lives & The Legacy of Charles Ethan Porter is March 13. Exhibit dates are April 1 to April 30. With this exhibit, Arts Center East is celebrating artists who are working in the style of still lifes today.

It is open to artists 18 years and older working in acrylic, pastels, oil, watercolor, charcoal, and colored pencil. Subjects can vary from traditional still life or memento mori composition (flowers, fruit, time-pieces, etc.) to more contemporary or surreal compositions.

Gallery hours are Thursday through Saturday, 1 to 5 p.m. Visit www.artscentereast.org/still-lives to view the exhibit online.

The exhibit of contemporary still lifes will be alongside artwork and information about 19th and early 20th century Rockville artist, Charles Ethan Porter. He was a renowned still life artist in the 19th and early 20th century. He lived in Rockville for most of his life.

Porter not only studied art at the National Academy of Design in New York City, he was one of the first Black artists to exhibit there. He was the only Black artist at the turn of the century who painted still lifes. His work can be found in collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and more. Most recently, a painting of Porter's was acquired by the Florence Griswold Museum in Connecticut. It is also likely that much of Porter's work is owned privately but has not been officially authenticated.

This exhibit is made possible by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Vernon Greater Together Community Fund.

Turn to Community News, Page 7

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Courant Community will print a current birthday photo FREE in one edition. Submit a current photo and 15-word description including name, age, birthday, town, your name, daytime phone number to community@courant.com or to Courant Community, P.O. Box 569, Hartford, CT 06141. Please submit three weeks in advance to avoid disappointment.



Happy 12th Birthday, Annalise (2/18): "To our angel Annalise, love you always. Daddy, Grandma, Grandpa, and Moon."



Happy 13th Birthday, Tommy (1/30): "Know that we are proud of you and love you! Hugs, your family and Nonna and Papa."



Happy 1st Birthday, Brielle (2/15): "You are the light of our lives. Love always. Mom, Dad, Grandma, and Grandpa."



Happy 8th Birthday, Mark (2/1): "You're the most wonderful, loving boy in the world. Love, Mommy, Daddy, Alex, and Donald."



Happy 19th Birthday, Olivia (2/14): "To the sweetest gift I received on Valentine's Day. Love you, GJ."



Happy 11th Birthday, Jai (2/28): "You are the twinkle of our eyes. Love from, Mama, Baba, and Dada."



Happy 8th Birthday, Jayden (2/4): "We can't believe you are eight! We love you forever and always! Mom, Dad, and Kaylin."



Happy 11th Birthday, Samar (2/11): "You make us proud everyday. We are blessed to have a child like you. Love, Mom, Dad, Sarah."

CROSSWORD ANSWERS FOR TODAY'S PUZZLE



South Windsor girl, 13, continues to helm veteran banner project

By Steve Smith
Courant Community

SOUTH WINDSOR — In 2020, Mihika Joshi helped create a project that added banners on light posts at South Windsor's Nevers Park, and each banner honored one of the town's veterans.

She was 11 years old at the time, but she spearheaded the effort (with help from the town's Patriotic Commission and American Legion Post 133), raised funds, contacted sponsors and vendors, and helped design the banners. She also presented the project to the Town Council, which unanimously approved.

Now 13, Joshi is at it again, adding more banners and reaching out to more of the town's veterans. Since the first year, 14 more veterans were added in 2021, bringing the total to 22 so far. The project has expanded to include veterans from the Korean and Vietnam Wars, as well as World War II.

She is looking to get information on more South Windsor veterans to be included in this year's banners, which are slated to be put up on Memorial Day weekend, and will stay up through Veterans Day. The banners are then given to the veterans or their families.

"I'm compiling names and putting them together," she said. "Later on, I'll be giving the names to the vendor that we have for the banners."

Joshi said the vendor making the banners is also a veteran and is using only materials made in the United States. She is also working on getting photos and information about the

veterans.

Fundraising has been done via donations from the South Windsor community. She is approaching local businesses and getting their sponsorships again. She is again getting a great response.

She said she's learned a great deal by getting in touch with veterans and their families, but hopes to do more in the future. She sees the banners whenever she passes by the park, and feels a sense of pride, but wants to form more of a connection.

"Every time I go by, I see the banners and I feel really proud of what we've done," she said. "I haven't gotten the chance to meet many of the veterans because of COVID. I've gotten to meet with a few of them, and it's quite an experience to talk to them and hear them share their stories. There's a lot to learn from them, and I really hope that through the mission of these banners that we can pass that along to other young people like me."

Joshi was able to visit with WWII Navy veteran Marie Walsh on her 99th birthday, to show her banner and talk with her.

"She had so many stories to tell. She had so many experiences in World War II. She was telling me about how she made friends in the military and how she is still able to talk to them today," Joshi said, adding that she was inspired by the female veteran.

Veterans from other towns, including Barkhamsted, have contacted Joshi about helping them start a similar banner program there, and inviting her to speak at a recent veterans

dinner.

"I was able to speak to some veterans and tell them about my project," she said. "Some of them were members of the American Legion and the Lions Club. They were thinking about expanding it into northern Connecticut towns in the Barkhamsted area."

Eventually, the goal is to have banners erected honoring every South Windsor veteran.

"I'm trying to get closer to that goal. I'm not sure if there are enough lamp posts to honor all of them," she said. "The underlying mission is to inspire, and share the stories of these veterans who gave bravely, and sacrificed so much to protect our freedom and make sure our country is safe. I think that people, youth especially, to hear these stories."

Future plans may include a website where people can watch videos or hear the veterans stories firsthand.

"After COVID's over and things start opening up, I'd like to talk to more veterans, speak to them, and document their stories," Joshi said.

Joshi is also working on a project to raise funds for the South Windsor Food and Fuel Bank. She spent 100 hours last summer helping FoodShare distribute food. She's also planning an Earth Day project with details to be determined.

For more information, or to nominate a veteran that should be honored, call Patriotic Commission members Herb Asplund (860-644-0881) or Daria Plummer (860-432-8403), or visit this link: <https://earthblogger.wixsite.com/vbp2021>.



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Developers build thousands of new housing units across Greater Hartford

By **Don Stacom**
Hartford Courant

Few forecasters anticipated a wave of large-scale apartment and condo projects when the pandemic started, but across central Connecticut developers are building thousands of new housing units.

Along with the uncertainty of the COVID-19 era are supply-chain breakdowns and a rough labor market, but none of that has been enough to stop a building bonanza in the region.

“In a lot of towns, there’s been no new inventory for so long. In Berlin, we’re going from such a small inventory to potentially 400 apartments in the next 24 months,” said Chris Edge, economic development director of Berlin.

“A lot of pieces are coming together: Young people are getting married later and having kids later. They have school debt, so they’re not looking to buy a house,” Edge said. “And then you have people looking to downsize but stay in town. Right now there’s demand from millennials, from empty-nesters, both ends of the spectrum.”

Developer Tony Valenti of Newport Realty, who is building apartments in Berlin and age-restricted condos in Plainville this year, said demand for new residential projects is intense.

“At the start of the pandemic, a lot of things were on pause. As soon as that pause let up, a lot of pent-up demand came out,” Valenti said. “And the cost of money was still cheap.”

Developer Avner Krohn, who has more than 700 new apartments across the region in planning or under construction, suggested that people who are spending more time at home now want more comfortable and stylish accommodations.

Many builders in the region credit municipalities’ greater willingness to offer tax breaks on new construction, and those near the CTRail or CTfastrak lines report that access to mass transit is helping to drive demand there.

The overwhelming majority of communities around Greater Hartford have large-scale projects in the works, and some have several apiece. Among them are these eight:

Avon

Boston-based Beacon Communities plans 176 one- and two-bedroom apartments in the Avon Park South office park. It will remodel the former headquarters of Security Connecticut Life Insurance into 76, and construct a four-story building next door for the other 100. The company anticipates that 140 will be affordably priced, with the rest at market rate.

Berlin

Newport Realty has just installed



A 52-unit apartment complex at Talcott and New Park Avenue in West Hartford is under construction, one of a series of large residential developments across Greater Hartford that are proposed or under construction. **MARK MIRKO / THE HARTFORD COURANT**

windows on the first stage of the five-building, mixed-use Steele Center, which will add 76 apartments in town. The \$18 million project is alongside the Amtrak and Hartford Line station, and developers Tony Valenti and Mark Lovley along with state officials describe it as a prime example of transit-oriented development. The one- and two-bedroom apartments will be leased at market rates.

East Hartford

Development partners Brian Zelman and Avner Krohn of Jasko Development plan 360 studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments on the site of the long-closed Showcase Cinemas along Silver Lane near I-84. Rents haven’t been established yet. Contractors this fall began the \$80 million project by demolishing the old multiplex theater.

Farmington

The former Hartford Marriott Farmington is being turned into 224 studios and one- and two-bedroom market rate apartments.

A development cooperative led by 15 Farm Springs LP paid \$21.5 million for the property in October. Part of the location’s appeal is that it’s near an I-84 exit as well as Route 6.

New Britain

Developer Avner Krohn of Jasko Development broke ground last year on The Brit, planned as a stylish six-story, 107-unit apartment building in the heart of downtown. Earlier this month, he announced he’ll tear down the aging Amato’s Toy and Hobby building next door to become the site for a twin project. In total, that will add nearly 220 market-rate one- and two-bedroom apartments.

Newington

Texas-based Anthony Properties plans 238 apartments near the CTfastrak Cedar Street station. The four-story building will have studios and one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. Rents have not been announced. The company’s proposal includes a 310-car garage, a swimming pool for tenants and a sidewalk directly to the

CTfastrak station.

Plainville

Before construction, Newport Realty reports it has already sold the first three phases of its four-phase condo development on the Plainville-Farmington line. Willow Brook Estates will be a 55-and-over complex of detached, single-story homes ranging from 1,444 to 1,610 square feet. Prices start at \$370,000.

West Hartford

Lexington Partners LLC has started work on the 292-unit One Park apartment complex at Park Road and Prospect Avenue. Developers plan studios as well as one-, two- and three-bedroom units at the former Sisters of St. Joseph convent. About 10 percent will be designated as affordable, with 90 percent at market rates. Amenities will include a fitness center, an outdoor pool and electric car charging stations.

Don Stacom can be reached at dstacom@courant.com.

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TABLET ASSISTANCE: Seeking someone to set up tablet and phone. Will pay. 860-666-5699.

FOUND: Baseball Card in protective plastic cover found in Marlborough, Connecticut in 2014, unintentionally tucked away, and recently uncovered. Send an email to cs-137@outlook.com with an accurate description of the card, and we'll get it back to the owner.

CLOWNS: Seeking clowns of all sizes to cheer up a sick child. Contact Ron at 860-613-0860.

TILES: Seeking 115 ceramic tiles, two inches by two inches. Any color. 860-432-8050.

SEEKING TO RENT: At least 1,500 to 2,000 sq. ft. of cold storage. Rocky at 860-490-3816 or 860-872-6269.

RECORDS: Seeking classical music vinyl albums for record player. 860-680-1299.

DRONE FOUND: Vicinity of Elm St & Courtney Drive, Rocky Hill. Text with description for return. 860-402-2655.

FOUND EYEGLASSES: Eyeglasses found on Carriage Drive, Manchester. 860-646-4242.

CPAP Machine: Senior in need of an inexpensive but working CPAP machine. 860-512-0684.

AUTO MECHANIC: Seeking auto mechanic to repair pickup truck. Am senior citizen, phone with reasonable price. 860-796-6132.

FURNITURE: Seeking a light wooden chest having five drawers in good condition. Call after 5 p.m. 860-665-0141.

LOST BRACELET: Bracelet lost at ALDIs of Rocky Hill by carriages. It was a birthday gift. Call if found. 860-778-8556.

PUZZLE SWAP: Will meet half way if too far to go. Have 20, most new. 860-568-1378.

SEEKING ITEMS FOR GAS ENGINE: Need flywheel and electric starter for 8 H.P. Briggs and Stratton gas engine. 860-633-5329.

SEEKING: Small boat trailer for a 12' boat, will buy. 860-741-2633.

NECKLACE FOUND: On Carillon Drive, Rocky Hill. Call with description for return. 860-965-6672. Messages will be returned.

SNOW SHOVELING HELP: Senior looking for an individual to shovel out parking space and clean off car after snow storms in Collinsville. 860-305-6701.

CAR: Seeking automobile to help out with transportation in 2022. Elderly with low Social Security. 860-515-1488.

LAPTOPS: Collecting used or new laptops from kind donors. These laptops will be donated to school kids in Ghana.

Contact Ben, 423-676-8815.
NAUTICAL ROPE: Looking for free 1/2- or 3/4-inch nautical rope for DIY projects. 860-490-8956.

PROPANE: Seeking propane Salamander. Will pay a reasonable price. 860-749-2190.

LAWN MOWING, SNOW REMOVAL: Does anyone know of someone who mows grass and/or plows snow? 860-289-0101 after 5 p.m.

CAR: Seeking a donated good running car for elderly person in Putnam for doctor appointments. Cannot afford one. 508-335-5060. Leave a message.

Community News

from Page 4

Vernon Historical Society collecting books for book sale

VERNON — The Vernon Historical Society is requesting new or used books, including children's books, Blu-ray DVDs, DVDs, CDs, and books on CDs.

No encyclopedias, dictionaries, VCR tapes, records, or cassette tapes are wanted. Books must be in clean, odor-free, and sellable condition. The drop-off location is the Vernon Historical Society, 734 Hartford Turnpike, from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and 10 a.m. to noon and 2 to 4 p.m. Thursdays.

Celebrate the Black experience at Jumping for Our Dreams

ENFIELD — WINDSOR — Celebrate the beauty and tenacity of the Black experience at Jumping for Our Dreams on Sunday, Feb. 13, from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Windsor Recreation Center, 330 Windsor Ave.

Explore music, movement, and storytelling from the African tradition with community educator Sister Love, participate in soaring community art creations — inspired by an interactive virtual story time with Brittany J. Thurman, author of the new picture book Fly — and practice your airborne skills as you jump double dutch with championship winners from Connecticut's JADHA Foundation. There will be a book giveaway and treats for all to enjoy.

This program, hosted by partners at Windsor Historical Society, Windsor Public Library's Wilson Branch, and Windsor Public Schools, is an indoor event in a large setting with seating available. Applicable COVID-19 guidelines will apply. Admission is free and advanced registration is required.

Visit windsorhistoricalsociety.org/event/jumping-for-our-dreams to register. For more information, email info@windsorhistoricalsociety.org or contact the Society at 860-688-3813.

Library hosting virtual program on fall prevention

WINDSOR LOCKS — The Windsor Locks Library, 28 Main St., will host a virtual Zoom program at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, with David Chessen, director of Access Physical Therapy and Wellness in Windsor Locks.

Chessen is a board-certified physical therapist in orthopedic and will be discussing fall prevention. Given the winter weather, there is a higher chance of falls, especially outdoors. Chessen will speak on how to improve your indoor/outdoor environment to reduce the risk of falls and strategies to improve your own confidence with walking and transfers. Register online at www.windsorlockslibrary.org or call 860-627-1495 for more information.

Library hosting Tinker Tank, Sphero Bolt program, movies

EAST GRANBY — The East Granby Public Library, 24 Center St., is hosting the following programs. Tinker Tank for ages five to 12 will take place on Mondays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Rotate interactive lab stations and explore science, technology, engineering, and math! Stations may include robotics, magnets, simple machines, roller coaster design, nature exploration and more.

Caregivers must supervise participants at all times. Tinker Tank will include small pieces and tools that are not suitable for young children.

This is a drop-in session. No registration is required. Participants sign in upon arrival. Tinker Tank is made possible by the East Granby Greater Together Community Fund.

Sphero Bolt Course, a two-class session, will take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9 and 16, for those in grades five to seven. Students will use Sphero Bots to play games, create coding programs, and complete challenges with the guidance of Erin Dugan.

Students will learn the basics of how to program BOLT robots to complete different tasks in addition to having time to explore and create on their own. Students must attend both sessions.

This program is made possible by the East Granby Greater Together Community Fund and

the East Granby Public Library.

Afternoon at the Movies will take place at 1 p.m. Wednesdays. The February movies are My Old Lady, Mary Martin as Peter Pan, Life with Dog and Being the Ricardos.

Library celebrates 'Take Your Child to the Library' Day

EAST WINDSOR — Saturday, Feb. 5, is Take Your Child to the Library Day. Drop by the Warehouse Point Library, 107 Main St., and make a 'Love Your Library' bookmark.

All children who visit in person will receive a surprise to take home. Design a valentine card for the local nursing home residents. Guess the correct number of candy hearts to win a prize and the hearts and help decorate the library with a special 'I Love My Library Because...' hearts. The library is open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Somers Women's Club offering two scholarships

SOMERS — The Somers Women's Club is seeking female candidates for scholarships to be awarded to a town resident from the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Connecticut. Each club in the Federation in Connecticut is invited to sponsor one woman for a memorial scholarship.

Applicants for the Dorothy E. Schoelzel Scholarship must have completed three or more years of undergraduate work in an accredited institution of higher learning with a 3.0 average or better. They must be matriculating for a bachelor's or post-graduate degree in the field of education.

Applicants for the Mary William Phipps Scholarship must have completed two or more years of undergraduate work in an accredited institution of higher learning with a 3.0 average or better and be matriculating for a bachelor's or post graduate degree. The award is granted on the basis of future promise, scholastic ability and financial need.

Call Deborah Pero at 860-749-9580 for an application. Completed forms must be received by Pero, Scholarship Committee chairwoman, before Feb. 10.

Be a good neighbor

To submit, send an email to community@courant.com or mail to 285 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06115. Good Neighbor is a service by Courant Community. Questions and answers are provided by our readers and are not verified. Medical information cannot be published. Caution should be exercised at all times. The publisher is not responsible for damage to any person or property.

CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce holds Annual Meeting, honors business leaders

By **Steve Smith**
Courant Community

GLASTONBURY — The CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce held its annual meeting at the St. Clement's Castle in Portland, on Jan. 26, and honored several of its members for accomplishments over the past year.

The tenor of the meeting was one of optimism, after dealing with the impacts of the pandemic on businesses over the past two years.

"It is great to see so many smiling faces," said President Jessica Olander. "I'm happy to say that we're back in the event business and in-person."

Outgoing Chairman of the Board of Directors Paul Haas said he saw so much pivoting during the pandemic, but is excited to see the events, because they mark important moments in time.

"Hiring Jessica Olander as our president [in early 2021] - that was not a pivot, that was an event. Jessica is taking a great organization that pivoted throughout 2020 and 2021 and is making significant improvements - changes that will make the chamber better and more essential in our community," Haas said, also thanking the chamber's Director of Membership Services Kim Collins.

"She has focused on our membership. That has paid off in increased energy and enthusiasm, and most importantly, increased membership," Haas said.

Incoming Chairman of the Board Steve Weir thanked Haas for his hard work during

the pandemic and keeping the chamber stable. Weir said his goals going forward are to work closely with chamber members to navigate the road ahead and reestablish what the chamber stands for.

"It still stands for networking and events," Weir said, adding that it also stands for mentoring, working together as three towns, and working with state legislators to advocate for small businesses.

"Small business is the backbone of the economy," he said. "We need to be telling our stories to the policy-holders with the same energy that we use towards our customers."

Haas was also given the President's Award.

"He does not stop," Olander said. "Paul is a man of the members... passionate and dedicated to this chamber."

The Ambassador of the Year was awarded to Lisa Romano, of William Pitt Sotheby's.

Romano said the ambassador program is one way to give back to the chamber.

"The chamber gives us so much to improve our business. It is well beyond networking. There are so many things the chamber gives us," she said. "This gives us a chance to give back to the chamber. It's very much a two-way relationship."

The Business Person of the Year award went to Bob Zanolungo, of Norcom Mortgage, and was presented by previous winner, Jordan Coe of Waverly Markets/Shop Rite of East Hartford.

"He radiates positivity," Coe said. "Bob is one of the most supportive people I've ever admired from afar. If you are in his orbit



Business Person of the Year Bob Zanolungo receives a legislative citation from State Rep. Jill Barry. **STEVE SMITH/THE HARTFORD COURANT**

and something matters to you, it matters to him. His endless dedication to the needs of others is inspiring and uplifting, particularly in a time when all of our mental health has suffered over the past two years."

Zanolungo has held many roles in the chamber since he started participating in 2006. He has also served as a Town Council member and is currently the chairman of the Town Planning and Zoning Commission.

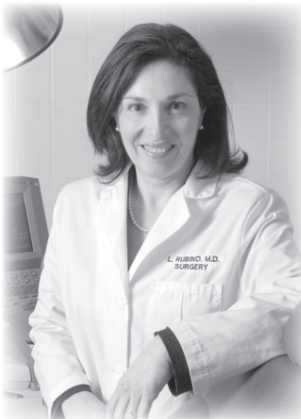
Zanolungo said his success was built on a foundation he created through his involvement with the chamber.

"I spent more hours the first few years in

the industry drinking coffee and connecting with people than closing loans," he said. "It was tough. I was building a foundation for success."

The pandemic, Zanolungo said, has taught businesses and chamber members many lessons.

"We live in a polarized culture and society," he said. "We have people telling us you're either with us or you're against us. People see things in either black or white, with no room for gray. And yet, magic happens in the gray area. We're all in this together. We'll either succeed or fail together."



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Incoming chamber Board of Directors Chairman Steve Weir said he plans to continue the success of his predecessor, Paul Haas.



Ambassador of the Year Lisa Romano explains how important the ambassadors' roles are to growing the chamber and helping businesses.



Outgoing Chairman of the Board of Directors Paul Haas (left) and Chamber President Jessica Olander (right) present a special recognition to Dean Marchessault.

Meet Dylan and Jett!

Dylan and Jett are so bonded and absolutely adorable! This brother/sister pair born in April are sweet, curious and love to play and cuddle! They have a shy side so they'll thrive with someone who appreciates that and will help them gain confidence! They also have experience living with adult cats. To learn more about Dylan and Jett, please contact Our Companions at



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OurCompanions.org
Helpline@OurCompanions.org



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Meet Silky! This sweet senior girl is 10 years old. She loves attention and is eager to be pet, and enjoys being brushed! She has lived with other cats and is very friendly. Silky would make a great low-key lap cat companion!

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		49					50		51			
52	53					54	55			56	57	
58					59				60			61
62					63				64			
65					66				67			

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Bandleader Miller
6 The Matterhorn for one
9 Bio. and zoo.
12 French composer Gabriel
13 ____ -dieu
14 Guam's harbor
15 Conductor Dorati
16 Ms. Samms or Lazarus
17 Gait
18 June occurrence
21 Example of likeness
22 Be worthy of
23 Mariner's clock
26 Paced
28 St. George's enemy
31 Eur. belligerents
32 Slight
34 Part of *Cats*
35 Tonic ____
38 Japanese pearl diver
39 Relation of an avocet
40 Off the cuff
41 Deal with a turkey
43 Agreed to terms
44 ____ Lion
46 Duck or mulligatawny
48 Tag onto fin or win
49 "... ____ and piled it

- on Pelion"
50 Elevated street sign
52 February phenomenon
58 Court proceedings
59 Put to flight
60 On or ____
62 Words of repudiation
63 Numerals
64 Plaster of Paris
65 Ems' followers
66 Unite
67 Put on cloud nine

DOWN

- 1 Artist's deg.
2 Richardson and Woosnam
3 African bishop
4 Swimmer's bane
5 Safety wear
6 ____ and the Man
7 VIP's transport
8 Rang out
9 "The only pretty ring-time"
10 Gator's relative
11 Fill to the brim
13 Private
14 Fascinate
19 Jumbo's forte
20 Allgood and Woods

- 23 Month after Adar
24 Cause attrition
25 Colorful time
27 Novelist Alexandre
29 Tramp steamer
30 ____ -gritty
33 Peers
36 Celebrations
37 Lower in estimation
42 Enrollment necessities
45 Like some minds
47 Gruel
51 Prestigious award
52 "Gimble in the ____"
53 Diehard's words
54 Island in the Hebrides
55 Prompted
56 Ms. Ponselle or Bonheur
57 Is compelled
61 Kind of hold

Community News

from Page 7

Library hosting Feb. 5 celebration, ice fishing seminar

ENFIELD — Find out what the Enfield Public Library, 104 Middle Road, is offering for families on Saturday, Feb. 5, for 'Take Your Child to the Library Day.'

Call the library at 860-763-7518 or 860-763-7512 or visit www.enfieldpubliclibrary.org for more information.

Make a magic scratch door hanger, get a library card, check out books, read a book to your child in our reading corner, design a heart telling us why you love the library and guess how many candies are in the jar.

Attend Playful Engineers with teaching artist and engineering enthusiast Jay Mankita at 10 a.m. Children ages five and up will have a chance to design, build, test, and play with Rube Goldberg Machines and other chain reactions. All programs are drop-in.

Ice Fishing 101 with Dylan Napoleone will take place at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9. Napoleone is an avid fisherman from Beacon Falls. Although he primarily fishes for bass in the warmer months, ice fishing is something he grew a great passion for at a young age.

This seminar is ideal for people of all ages and experience levels. Dylan will demonstrate and instruct on lures/bait, equipment, safety, techniques, and more.

Little Sisters of the Poor soup sale ongoing

ENFIELD — The Little Sisters of the Poor—St. Joseph's Residence will host its annual soup sale at St. Joseph's Residence, 1365 Enfield St.

All orders can be made between now and Feb. 25. All orders are to-go and will be available via drive-through pick-up from noon to 4 p.m. March 2.

Available soups are broccoli and cheddar for \$10 and New England clam chowder for \$12, both in 32 oz. containers, ready to warm and eat at home.

Call Christina at 860-265-1872 or visit <https://LSPsoup22.givesmart.com> to place an order. St. Joseph's Residence provides care for 85 elderly poor residents. All proceeds will help to complete ongoing building projects including boilers, plumbing, electrical switches and more.

Town adopts new solid waste policy for tipper barrels

ENFIELD — The Town Council recently voted to revise the Solid Waste Policy which has reduced the number of trash barrels that the Town will collect, encourages recycling and also changes the yard waste collection. This policy will go into effect on March 1.

"How to handle trash is a big issue in the state, and across the nation," said Mayor Bob Cressotti. "Current market conditions are very volatile in terms of costs associated with Solid Waste and Recycling materials. The Town of Enfield's current contract is that we pay \$81.50 per ton to dispose of trash. For recycling items, the contract is \$11.04 per ton to dispose of these materials. This has become a crisis due to China's Sword policy which has limited that country's purchase of the United States' after-market recycling product, and compounded by the problems with trash disposal sites like what we are seeing with MIRA in Hartford."

For Solid Waste (Trash), households will have a grey barrel picked up each week as its primary barrel. Public Works staff are working to affix red tags to primary barrels along trash routes during the month of February. If households would like to put out a second barrel, they will need to purchase a tag at the Public Works offices at 140 Moody Road from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The cost of the second barrel tag is \$85.

For Recycling, residents are eligible for up to three blue barrels at no charge. This area has created a significant swing within the budget. Previously, the Town received a stream of revenue amounting to \$22.75 per ton to dispose of recycled items. Now, the Town has to pay to dispose this collection at \$11.04, which is also subject to a 2.5-percent increase each year, and most likely will continue to increase. This is still significantly less than the \$81.50 per ton that it costs to process solid waste.

For the Yard Waste subscription program for weekly collection from April through October, the ordinance is going to eliminate the unlimited nature of yard waste barrel pick up and limit it to four.

The Town will dispose of two free brown barrels weekly at no cost for each household that chooses to participate. The households will also be eligible to purchase two additional tags for brown barrels at a cost of \$45 per barrel.

The State Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has adopted a Comprehensive Materials

LOCAL NEWS

Community News

from Page 10

Management Strategy (CMMS) which is a roadmap to achieving the state's goal of 60 percent diversion of materials from disposal by 2024. "In order to reach these goals, we need to improve the performance of municipal recycling programs and reduce waste, including increasing participation and compliance with mandatory recycling provisions," said Councilor Marie Pyznar, who sat in on the recent Public Works sub-committee meeting.

"The Town will be working with local groups and organizations as well as the schools to encourage recycling and reuse options in order to reduce the amount of trash collected. Currently, the Town offers free drop off for electronics, cardboard and textiles at the Transfer Station," said Councilor Matt Despard.

Residents may also bring yard waste for free to the Transfer Station, up to five visits. On April 30, the Public Works Department will offer a Household Hazardous Waste collection at its facility on Moody Road.

"There are also opportunities being pursued for composting, community clean-ups, and swaps for larger items that may be of interest to others," said Deputy Mayor Gina Cekala. "The more we can keep out of the \$81.50 per ton waste stream, the better off we will be budget-wise."

Center offering tax aide program, jewelry class

ENFIELD — The Enfield Senior Center, 299 Elm St., is offering the following programs. Call 860-763-7425 for more information.

February programming began on Monday, Jan. 31. There are openings in fitness classes, arts and crafts programs, computer programs and presentations. View the complete listing in the "Center Connection" newsletter online at www.enfield-ct.gov/seniors or stop by the Senior Center and pick one up in person.

AARP Tax-Aide Program: The Senior Center began booking appointments for tax aide on Jan. 20. Spots are filling fast. Call the front desk at 860-763-7425 or stop in to book an appointment.

Vaccination Clinics: The Senior Center is hosting the Department of Health mobile vaccine van on Fridays through March 18.

Staff from Griffin Health will be on hand to provide first, second and booster shots for adults (12+) and first and second shots for children (5-11). No appointments are needed.

Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. on the following days: Feb. 4 (pediatric and adult), Feb. 11 (pediatric and adult), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 18 (adult only), and 1 to 5 p.m. Feb. 25 (pediatric and adult).

CHOICES Counseling: Will St. George, CHOICES Counselor, will offer free

one-hour appointments on Friday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon at the Senior Center starting Feb. 4. CHOICES appointments are for persons either enrolled or looking to enroll in Medicare, turning 65, moving to Connecticut, or have other health insurance but are eligible for Medicare. To book an appointment, call 860-763-7425.

Jewelry Making will take place on Friday, Feb. 4, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Create jewelry from a collection of beads. The instructor provides all tools, and the beads are purchased separately. Cost to attend is \$4 per resident and \$5 per non-resident.

Computer Classes: How to Backup Your Important Files will take place Wednesday, Feb. 9, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Cost to attend is \$3 per resident and \$4 per non-resident. Limit: 8 participants.

Pickleball: Morning and evening sessions are available at the Annex. Contact the Recreation Department at 860-253-6420 or visit www.enfield-ct.gov/recreation for more information.

Chair Volleyball: Contact the Recreation Department at 860-253-6420 or visit www.enfield-ct.gov/recreation for more information.

Ask The ...: The following services are available for a free 15-minute consultation during limited morning hours. Call the Senior Center at 860-763-7425 to schedule an appointment. Schedule: Legal Consultation, Feb. 15; Ask the CPA: Feb. 16; Ask the Lawyer, Feb. 23.

Department donates gift cards for veterans

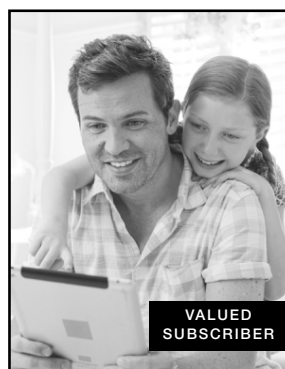
AVON — BERLIN — On Tuesday, Dec. 7, the Berlin Volunteer Fire Department made a presentation to the Berlin Veterans Commission. This makes the seventh year they have donated gift cards for Berlin veterans and veteran widows in need.

Berlin Fire Department members Al Pipkin, Joe LaVallee Sr., Mat Sturgeon, Tom Bryers and Photographer John Dumin presented the commission with \$10,000 in \$100 gift cards.

In 2021, even with Covid-19, they were able to hold their annual fundraisers and raise money. All the money given by the firefighters stays in town. It only goes to resident veterans who are in need. Recipients are chosen by the Veterans Commission, who learn about veterans and their widows in need, often from others because the person in trouble is too proud to ask for help.

"It is an unbelievable experience to be able to present these cards to our veterans and to let them know that their service to our country, along with their sacrifices, will never be forgotten," the Berlin Volunteer Fire Department said in a press release.

The Berlin Volunteer Fire Department also sent a \$1,000 donation to the Woody Williams Foundation, CT Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, that will be completed by and dedicated on Saturday, April 23, at the Berlin Veterans Memorial Park.



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Luxury with a little art

By William Heald
Special to Courant Community

The luxury sedan class has faced many challenges over the last few years, primarily from the SUV crowd which has infiltrated every class of automobile and pushed manufacturers to transplant their upscale amenities into much larger, more versatile vehicles. But as good as these all-weather wagons are, there's still something special about a large roomy sedan that optimizes comfort for all occupants and delivers a higher level of ride and handling than its SUV counterparts. What's even more intriguing is the luxury sedan is now becoming more affordable (in relative terms) than a comparably equipped SUV in the same class. In short, there's still plenty of reasons to give a luxury car a look if you're in the market for an upscale experience, and the Volvo S90 is a true European jewel with its own unique character.

First off, the S90 is a very large car. The EPA classifies it as a mere midsize, but I personally think this is a full-size in terms of interior room and overall footprint. The chassis is built on an expansive 120-inch wheelbase, and is available in three trim lines including Momentum, Inscription and R-Design. All-wheel-drive is standard, and our R-Design model was powered by the B6 2-liter turbocharged inline four, assisted by a light hybrid system that adds additional horsepower and torque for a total output of 295 horses.

The gearbox is an 8-speed geartronic automatic with paddle shifters and an auto start/stop feature. With the competition for

the most part having larger displacement engines, the B6 manages to do a decent job of hustling the big sedan around. The transmission works well with this engine and the AWD system is seamless in execution. The optional adaptive air suspension keeps the S90 under control even on rougher roads, but can get harsh on some surfaces. Handling is surprisingly agile for such a big car, and once you get used to the substantial mass it can be fun to drive on more challenging roads.

Open the driver's door of the S90 and you're greeted with a design environment like no other in the automotive world. The interior looks more sculpted than constructed, and includes a completely virtual instrument display for the driver as well as a huge, portrait-format central touch screen for infotainment and a slew of settings for all aspects of the car. Excellent R-Design sport front seats are covered with nappa/nubuck/leatherette upholstery to keep you comfortable during long days on the road.

Volvo of course arms this flagship sedan with a host of high tech safety features, even including a mitigation system to prevent running off the road. And while the front seats are a study in mobile comfort, the rear seats are especially impressive with limousine-like legroom and a host of amenities to make your companions feel like first class passengers.

The 2022 Volvo S90 B6 AWD R-Design is EPA rated 23 MPG city/31 highway and has a base price of \$54,950. With options, our MSRP came to \$64,540. www.volvocars.com



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All America Selection Winners for 2022

By Dawn Pettinelli, UConn Home & Garden Education Center

As I leisurely make my way through a stack of seed catalogs, sipping on tea and savoring the warmth of the fireplace, I mostly jot down, in my well-worn notebook, tried and true vegetable and flower varieties that need to be ordered. The lure of new and improved plants, rediscovered heirlooms, and exciting cultivars or species untried by me, is just too great, however, and inevitably, my list grows longer. Among the handful of new plants that gets whittled down into a more realistic order is at least one All America Selections (AAS) Winner. What is an AAS winner and how does it get chosen?

The AAS is an organization that evaluates new garden varieties and was founded in 1932 by W. Ray Hastings who was the president of the Southern Seedsmen's Association of Atlanta, Georgia. He was looking for a way for home gardeners and consumer garden magazines to find out about new and improved plants. To do so, he encouraged seed companies to establish trial grounds where new varieties could be grown and evaluated. Presently there are about 80 trial gardens throughout North America. Professional horticulturists volunteer their time to evaluate plant performance.

In 1933 the first AAS winners were announced and AAS winners have been introduced to the public every year after. Two types of awards are given. About once each decade, a plant is given a Gold Medal Award, which signifies a breeding breakthrough. Last year a Gold Medal Award was given to an outstanding zinnia. This year two flowers received Gold Medal Awards, quite unusual and attesting to their outstanding characteristics. More common is the AAS Award which recognizes a flower or vegetable exhibiting superior characteristics compared to similar varieties available on the market. Both national and regional awards can be made. Only new, previously unsold varieties are used in the seed trials.

Begonia lovers will swoon over Gold Medal winner, 'Viking Explorer Rose on Green'. A crescendo of rosy pink, 2½ inch flowers is framed by glossy green foliage. Plants have a unique spreading and trailing habit reaching about 16 inches in height and width, perfect for filling a hanging basket or container. This Viking cultivar is a sturdy, stalwart plant tolerant of heat, rain, disease, insects, and pollution.

'Bee's Knees' is the first petunia to win a Gold Medal award since 1950. Vibrant yellow 2 to 2½ inch blossoms just keep coming from summer through frost. Reaching 8 to 10 inches in height and with a mounded, cascading habit, 'Bee's Knees' would be marvelous in window boxes or as an attractive edging plant or groundcover. Dead-heading is not necessary. This tough petunia stood up well to rain, heat and cold.

Sunflower 'Concert Bell' was selected for a national award. Unlike many sunflowers, 'Concert Bell' produces multiple clusters of 10 to 12 blossoms on an erect, columnar stem. Plants reach up to 6 feet in height. The 5 to 6-inch diameter golden flowers are pollenless, making for good cut flowers. Multiple direct sowings are suggested for continual summer to fall blooms.

Five vegetables were selected as AAS National winners. Eggplant 'Icicle' looks as good as it tastes. Cylindrical pure white fruit are ready for picking at about 7 inches in length. Plants are very productive with fewer spines than most eggplants. They stand about 4 feet high and can be grown in the garden as well as containers.

'Bauer' is a beautiful, dark green oakleaf lettuce. Its thick and crunchy leaves are particularly flavorful. Compact plants can be harvested as baby lettuce leaves or left to mature into a tight, rounded head 58 days from seed. Plants can be spaced tightly at 8 inches for a bountiful harvest in a small space.

Those attracted to unique looking but flavorful tomatoes might like to sample 'Purple Zebra'. Said to have a rich, complex flavor, the dark red fruits bear dark green stripes. Up to two hundred 3 to 4-ounce fruits are produced on tall plants that require staking. 'Purple Zebra' showed strong resistance or tolerance to many common tomato diseases.

A sweet and hot pepper also became 2022 AAS national winners. 'Dragonfly' produces gorgeous purple peppers with thick, juicy walls. The 4-lobed fruits are almost 4 inches in size and plants are super productive yielding up to 40 peppers per plant. Upright plants reach about 3 feet in height. Peppers can be picked when still green or even left to mature to a deep red.

Hot pepper, 'Buffy' produces 250 or more green to red good-sized fruits on 28-inch plants. Fruits are about 1½ inches long and slightly triangular. They make flavorful sport peppers but keep in mind they are hot – 500,000 Scoville units. That will make some chili sauce to keep you warm next winter!

When deciding what to grow in your garden next year, be sure to check out present or past AAS winners. They are sure to be stars of your garden as well. For gardening questions, call the UConn Home & Garden Education Center (toll-free) at (877) 486-6271, visit www.ladybug.uconn.edu, or get in touch with your local Cooperative Extension Center.

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